

Park Issues – Team 5

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Hosted by Jeff Ward

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Indy Parks EE Administrator Jeff Ward: Please take a moment to think about your best park moment/experience.

- Love Holliday Park but too much activity at night
- Eagle Creek – wildlife
- Downtown landscaping and well-maintained playgrounds
- Diversity of parks – skate park, nature lovers, golf, but not enough parks/open spaces

Jeff: Average taxpayer = 7.8 cents per day = \$31 per year per person

How does that compare to other cities? Columbus, OH, \$50 per taxpayer; out west \$100

Question: Do you have a long-term master plan for parks?

Jeff: Yes, on file; IDNR will revise in 2014.

Question: Does it rank plans and goals?

Jeff: Yes, and we say we want a certain acreage of land but we want to increase it even further. Think about passive vs. active use of land.

Question: Is the Comprehensive Plan funded?

Jeff: Master plans look at specific improvements for each park; the comp plan is the big picture/theoretical.

Suggestion: Do a better job of sticking to plans that are developed through public meetings. You have these meetings and then it never happens.

Question: Marott Park parking lot has broken glass and car break-ins. Why aren't these being investigated?

Jeff: Any crime that happens in a city can and will take place in a park. We try to educate the public and IMPD patrols the parks. Remember, we have 206 properties in 400 square miles.

Questions: Eagle Creek Park's trails and maintenance, nice dirt trail, now IPR is putting gravel down. It is difficult to walk or run on. We understand erosion and the need, but it is being put on trails everywhere. There are places that are supposed to be rustic. Don't over-maintain. Maintain the wild/rustic state. Can't please everyone every time. Soccer fields do not belong in Eagle Creek Park. No such thing as a perfect park. There needs to be parks for different purposes. The perfect park system should address everyone's needs, but not really have all at one park. City complains that no one recycles. Well then,

there should be recycling containers out in the parks. Or, signs that encourage park users to recycle their trash themselves.

Jeff: Indy Parks spends \$1 million in mowing, and more than that in trash pickup.

Questions: Smoking in parks should not be allowed 100 yards within area of the playground, quality of life issue. I volunteer at Eagle Creek Park but we do not have good communication from Indy Parks on volunteer opportunities. The Web site is lacking information. There is no way to communicate needs on a large scale or a calendar.

Jeff: We need to use our volunteers. We have looked into a way to communicate better.

Questions: Security – Having a caretaker at the yacht club who lives on site has reduced crime 90 percent. You need to find some people who would live in a trailer to do security for a park. Mowing less – habitat restoration group looking at this issue.

Jeff: There is a generational gap with some citizens expecting all parks to be mowed and trimmed. We have already removed one acre out of every 11 from mowing.

Question: Conservation and Restoration – Opportunities to look at DPW projects to add green and sustainability issues in regards to CO2. Bring in goats or grazing animals to reduce emissions. Seems like all we've talked about are little issues and we need to get back to the topic. Focus on the core issues, not nitpicking.

Question: No one wants to talk about the park system. It is only "their" park that people are interested in.

Question: I moved here in 1984, did Boy Scouts, never heard about parks, never knew about Indy Parks.

Question: Web site is a letdown, can't find information.

Question: Can we get facility/amenity guides?

Question: Funding issues: What are we doing? Contact local groups and businesses. Signs, naming rights, small but limited.

Jeff: We are looking at strengthening our relationships and cultivating more partnerships – i.e. Bright Point, Citizens Energy, Home Depot.

CONCLUSION

Largest issues: Security, funding, more land, communication, pack in/pack out trash, how can we get political support for parks.